

she returned to the community that she loved. From 1990 until 2007, Vanderbilt has benefited from her steady service, and the University knows it. In many ways, Betty defined both her role at the school and the school's role in the community; she retires as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Community, Neighborhood and Government Relations and leaves as her legacy an institution that fully and conscientiously participates in its community. And Vanderbilt has immortalized her by dedicating the Betty C. Nixon Center for Community Connections in her honor.

Betty's ceaseless service to Nashville government and nonprofit organizations belies the limited number of hours in a day. Oasis Center, Nashville Electric Service, Tennessee State University Business Incubation Center, Bill Wilkerson Hearing and Speech Center, Davidson County Election Commission, Nashville Women's Breakfast Club, United Way, Project PENCIL, West End United Methodist Church, Citizen's Bank, Youth Encouragement Services, Tennessee Women's Political Caucus, YMCA Black Achievers, Rochelle Center, League for the Hard of Hearing, Alcohol and Drug Council of Middle Tennessee, WIN—these groups and many others have all benefited from Betty's skill, charm, and grace. She has been honored as a YWCA Woman of Achievement and has received the prestigious Athena Award.

Madam Speaker, Nashville is a stronger, more vibrant community because of Betty Nixon's commitment to improving the lives of those around her. Today I rise to pay tribute to her legacy, express our Nation's gratitude for her service, and wish her many more years of contented engagement with a city that has been forever changed by her efforts.

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE: CELEBRATING JOE HARDY ON HIS 84TH BIRTHDAY

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight an American success story, an inspirational Pennsylvanian and a great American, Joe Hardy, III. Joe Hardy is the embodiment of the idea that, as Winston Churchill said, "We make a living by what we get and we make a life by what we give." This month marks Joe Hardy's 84th birthday and it is only right that his achievements in business and his contributions to society be celebrated in this, the people's House.

Joe Hardy is perhaps best known as the founder of 84 Lumber, the largest privately owned building materials supplier to professional contractors in America. But he is much more than this. He is a self-made man, a civic leader and a great philanthropist. He is the embodiment of the American Dream and his story continues to encourage those around him.

With 84 Lumber, Joe Hardy reached a level in business that thousands of smaller entrepreneurs aspire to reach for themselves. And like many Americans just starting out in the world of business, Joe Hardy did not inherit his success; he built it from the ground up. His is a true American success story, a story that is alive and well today.

When Joe Hardy graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a degree in engineering he joined his family's jewelry company. He demonstrated his business acumen early, and quickly became the company's best salesman. But Joe Hardy wanted to make his own name in the business world, so in 1952, with his own savings and the help of some friends, he opened a cash-and-carry lumber yard for contractors in the town of Eighty-Four, Pennsylvania. In 1956 he changed his company's name from Green Hills Lumber to 84 Lumber and the rest, as they say, is history.

84 Lumber grew quickly, reaching \$84 million in sales in 1971 and \$1 billion in sales in 1996. As his company and his fortune grew, Joe Hardy began to give back to the communities that had given him the chance to succeed. In 1987, he bought the Nemaquin Resort in a bankruptcy sale and turned it into a major economic draw and tourist destination for Western Pennsylvania.

He brought a PGA tournament to the world class Nemaquin Resort that not only drew attention to the area, but raised money for worthy causes. The list of philanthropic achievements in this area is long, but a few examples stand out.

Over the past 15 years, Joe Hardy's 84 Lumber Golf Tournaments have raised over \$1 million for the Westmoreland-Fayette Boy Scout Council. He organized a PGA Tour event from 2003 to 2006 that raised more than \$6 million for local charities and \$1.3 million for Hurricane Katrina relief. Additionally, through his long collaboration with Habitat for Humanity, Joe Hardy enabled the funding and construction of 50 homes along the hurricane ravaged Gulf Coast.

But his philanthropy does not end there. In 1990, Joe Hardy gave a grant to Washington and Jefferson College to start an Entrepreneurial Spirit Studies Program as well as a scholarship fund its participation. This celebrated program continues to train tomorrow's business leaders today.

In addition to philanthropy, Joe Hardy is also civically engaged. He continues to serve as a County Commissioner for Fayette County Pennsylvania and personally invested his own money into the revitalization of Uniontown, the hometown of General George C. Marshall.

The list of Joe Hardy's accomplishments is simply too long to cover here. However, to the people of Fayette County, the contributions he has made to their lives are evident everyday. Whether you walk down the streets of a revitalized Uniontown, enjoy a jump in business due to the Nemaquin Woodlands Resort, or build your new house with 84 Lumber products, Joe Hardy's impact is there.

I want to wish Joe Hardy a happy 84th birthday and thank him for all he has done throughout his life. With his achievements and outlook on life, I am sure we will see many more successes in the years ahead.

HONORING THE CAREER OF BILL SMITH

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the banking ca-

reer of Bill Smith, who, as he puts it, started out as an errand runner and left as chairman of the board.

Bill began working for the Bank of Commerce in Woodbury, Tennessee, in 1950. At the time, there were five other employees working at the bank on the west side of the Cannon County Square. He began as a runner and went on to fill many other positions at the bank, including using a pen and ledger to keep the balance of the entire bank.

In 1954, the bank moved to its current location on the north side of the square, and Bill continued moving up. In 1964, an addition was added to the bank, and Bill earned the title of vice president.

In 1967, the Bank of Commerce was sold to Third National Bank, and Bill became president. Another addition to the Woodbury branch was added in 1982. Under Bill's leadership, the Bank of Commerce sponsored the Cannon County Good Ole Days for 25 years and started the annual Red Apple Days in Auburntown. Bank branches were built and obtained in the Edgefield community and in Auburntown.

When the bank sold in the early 1980s, it had grown to about 50 full-time and 20 part-time employees. The bank sold again in 1991 to Regions, and Bill's son, Steve, who had begun working for the bank while attending Middle Tennessee State University, became president. Bill became chairman of the board until he retired from the banking industry on August 31, 2005.

In his so-called retirement, Bill has been helping his son, Mike, with their family business, Smith Funeral Home, and managing his family farm. He is an active member of the Church of Christ.

Christine Dillon, who has worked with Bill since 1951, both at the bank and the funeral home, says Bill is described by friends as kind, friendly, a good Christian and a great marketing person. He is much loved by his friends and former banking colleagues. I congratulate Bill on his retirement, and I wish him many years of happiness.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HAITIAN PROTECTION ACT OF 2007

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Haitian Protection Act of 2007.

This important piece of legislation would designate Haitian nationals as eligible for Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

The creation of TPS was intended to serve as the statutory embodiment of safe haven for those who are fleeing—or reluctant to return to—a potentially dangerous situation in their country of origin.

According to section 244A of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990, TPS may be granted when: there is ongoing armed conflict posing a serious threat to personal safety; it is requested by a foreign state that temporarily cannot handle the return of nationals due to environmental disaster; or extraordinary and temporary conditions in a foreign state exist which prevent aliens from returning.

Haiti meets all three of these requirements for designation; and yet, not once have Haitian nationals qualified for TPS.

Madam Speaker, there are currently nine countries that are protected under the TPS provision: Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Burundi, Somalia, Sudan, and Liberia. Within the past year, all nine countries have obtained status renewal for an additional twelve months because it has been determined by the Department of Homeland Security that the country in question is unable to handle the return of its nationals due to varying circumstances.

Last year, during the 109th Congress, I wrote to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regarding the unfair treatment of Haitian nationals by current U.S. Immigration policies.

In response to my letter, DHS stated that before they could make a decision to grant TPS to Haiti, they had to determine whether there was "(1) an ongoing armed conflict within the foreign state posing a serious threat to the personal safety of the country's nationals if returned there; (2) an environmental disaster, such as an earthquake, flood, drought, or epidemic in the state; or (3) extraordinary and temporary conditions in the foreign state that prevent nationals from returning safely."

After assessing the aforementioned factors as they apply to Haiti, DHS has taken the following stance: "Decisions on these requests will be made on a case-by-case basis based on the specific circumstances involved when requested."

Madam Speaker, Haiti's recent political, civil, and governmental crises, as well as the extraordinary and temporary conditions caused by several natural disasters, easily make Haitian nationals currently in the United States eligible for TPS.

Any major storm that hits Florida almost always crashes through Haiti first, taking lives and leaving cities already impoverished from the previous year's storms, further devastated.

Throughout Haiti, vast deforestation leaves the country extremely vulnerable to mudslides from heavy rains. It is now 2007 and Haiti still remains severely devastated by the aftermath of Tropical Storm Jeanne, Hurricane Ivan, and serious floods throughout the region that occurred in 2004. The loss of life in Haiti is all but too common, and unfortunately overlooked, when natural disasters whip through the region.

The death toll that resulted from the combination of these natural disasters reached over 7,500. In addition, an estimated 250,000 people were left homeless across the country and at least 4,000 homes were destroyed, with thousands more damaged as a result of the storm.

The Haitian government's ability to provide basic governmental services—clean water, education, passable roads and basic healthcare—is still severely compromised by these natural disasters. Repatriating Haitians at this time imposes an additional burden on government resources that are already stretched too thin.

Concerning stability and overall safety, Haiti is still in dire need of an adequate policing force to maintain order and halt the escalation in kidnappings that are plaguing the nation.

As of January 2007, the Department of State continues to advise Americans that current conditions in Haiti make it unsafe to travel due to the potential for looting, the possibility

of random violent crime, and the serious threat of kidnapping for ransom. The warning goes on to state that more than 50 American citizens, including children, have been kidnapped over the past year.

Madam Speaker, if it is unsafe for our citizens to travel to Haiti, then those same conditions should make it much too dangerous and inappropriate to forcibly repatriate Haitians at this time. It is unfortunate and appalling that our current immigration policies hold such harmful double standards.

I want to make it very clear that I acknowledge and heartily congratulate Haiti's shift toward recovery, as seen by the successful democratic elections held throughout 2006.

However, President Préval's nascent democratic government still faces immense challenges in regards to rebuilding Haiti's police and judicial institutions to achieve the fair and prompt tackling of the ongoing political and criminal violence.

Most recently there has been a sharp increase in common crime, especially kidnappings which continue to plague the capital and other cities and regions.

The absence of security and failure of police and the judicial system to function effectively only makes matters worse.

In addition to safety and human rights considerations, halting the deportation of Haitians is also an economic matter.

Under the law, TPS beneficiaries are eligible to obtain work authorization permits. The ability for Haitian Nationals to legally work in the United States put them in a position to contribute to their country's reform and development until such time it is safe for their return to Haiti.

Madam Speaker, the Haitian Diaspora has always played a pivotal role in assisting Haiti. It is widely known that Haitians residing in the United States often work three jobs to send money back to Haiti each month. Many Haitians in the United States often send remittances to support family members, and others travel home to lend their expertise toward rebuilding and humanitarian efforts.

Designating Haiti under TPS status would preserve and increase remittances—over a billion dollars a year—from the Haitian Diaspora to relatives and communities in Haiti that are key for welfare, survival, and recovery.

Haiti is more dependent than any other country on remittances—nearly a billion dollars a year—sent home by Haitians in the United States. Remittances to Haiti far exceed foreign aid.

Many Haitian Nationals in the United States who previously sustained relatives in Haiti through remittances, are being deported, further depriving Haiti of an important source of financial aid that is well-positioned to assist when based here in the United States.

Madam Speaker, by refusing to give Haiti the TPS designation, our inequitable immigration policies continue to send a clear message:

The safety of Haitian lives is not a priority compared to a Honduran, Liberian or Sudanese life.

We must act to change this perception. Our immigration policies have to change; they must reflect fairness and treat Haitians equally to Nicaraguans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans whose deportations are suspended and who are allowed to work and support their families back home.

Madam Speaker, Haiti is making great strides to recover and rebuild. We cannot reward their efforts by kicking this country, and its people, down when they are doing everything possible to bring their country out of chaos and destruction.

The election of President Préval in February 2006, and the election shortly thereafter of a national legislature which promptly confirmed his cabinet nominees, along with the broad internal and international support which this new democratic government enjoys, makes it imperative that the United States seize every current opportunity to assist that government to succeed.

Many in Haiti, as well as the Haitian Diaspora worldwide, need us to reach beyond what has been done before and demand for more.

The Haitian Protection Act of 2007 is necessary to achieve fundamental fairness in our treatment of Haitian immigrants and remedy the accurate and widespread perception that U.S. policy has discriminated against them.

Madam Speaker, we cannot miss this opportunity to help Haiti stabilize its economy, rebuild its political and economic institutions, and provide a future of hope for Haiti's people.

I ask my colleagues to support this legislation and urge the House Leadership to bring it swiftly to the House floor for consideration.

THE CURRENT HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN CHINA

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I would like to call to the attention of the House the following assessment of the current human rights situation in China. Harry Wu, a renowned human rights activist who survived 19 years in China's notorious laogai labor camps, has detailed in this assessment the current level of human rights abuses by China's brutal dictatorship.

As we approach the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, and China continues to grow as an economic and political powerhouse, we must remind ourselves of China's abusive and oppressive treatment of innocent civilians, and fight against the tyranny of the communist regime in Beijing.

THE CURRENT HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN CHINA, JANUARY 2007

(By Harry Wu)

The People's Republic of China (PRC) continues to awe the world with its rapid economic development attracting foreign investment from all over the world. Recently, China's power and influence in international politics has also grown. China has been extolled for taking the lead in negotiations with North Korea, and the world looks forward to the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. However the international community has overlooked the most important fact—the Chinese government is still a ruthless dictatorship.

China may be involved in the Six-Party talks with North Korea but it is still the nation's closest ally and biggest supplier. China is embracing capitalism but that does not equal freedom and democracy. This memo provides a brief description of human rights violations in China that are occurring